

RACE strategy example: The Great Auk

The Auk was a sea-going diving bird about the size of a domestic goose, related to puffins. For a bird endowed only with flipper-like wings, and therefore absolutely unable to fly, this species had an astonishing geographic range. It embraced the shores of northern Europe to North Cape, southern Greenland, southern Labrador, and the Atlantic coast of North America as far south as Massachusetts.



In the life history of this bird, a great tragedy was enacted in 1800 by sailors on Funk Island, where men were landed by a ship, and spent several months slaughtering great auks and using their fat for oil. In this process, the bodies of thousands of auks were burned as fuel. On Funk Island, a favorite breeding-place, the great auk was exterminated in 1840, and in Iceland in 1844. Many natives enjoyed eating the bird, and being easily captured, either on land or sea, the commercialism of its day soon obliterated the species. The last living specimen was seen in 1852, and the last dead one was picked up in Trinity Bay, Ireland, in 1853.

--excerpted and adapted from *Our Vanishing Wild Life: Its Extermination and Preservation* by William T. Hornaday, 1913.

Use the RACE strategy to explain how the Great Auk became extinct.

R → The Great Auk became extinct in a number of ways. Sailors who landed on Funk Island burned them as fuel, and natives **A** ate them. According to the text, men "spent several months slaughtering great auks and using their fat for oil," and "natives enjoyed eating the bird." These quotations show that the bird was used by men for various purposes, leading to its extinction. **E**